

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

DIE DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT VON MARYLAND

VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

APRIL-MAY, 2004

ISSUE # 45

SOCIETY COMMEMORATES 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF MERGENTHALER

PRIZES OFFERED TO STUDENTS OF MERGENTHALER VO-TECH SCHOOL

Ottmar Mergenthaler is the Society's most world-renown member. He invented the linotype machine which revolutionized the printing industry and gave him the title of the "Second Gutenberg". He was born on May 11 in Germany 150 years ago. To honor his memory the Society has established three prizes (\$300, \$150 and \$75) to the students of the Mergenthaler High School who submit the winning papers on Mergenthaler and his impact on the world of reading. The contest is appropriate for a school in Baltimore, whose motto is "The City that Reads". Our vice president, Brigitte Fessenden, and director Ted Potthast, met with the school's principal, Dr. Irby Miller, to initiate the program. Dr. Miller was pleased to have the opportunity to bring the Mergenthaler tradition to the students through the writing competition. The school specializes in math and science, but also maintains a creative writing department and has a distinguished honors program. The faculty will review the contest entries and select the ten best.

Mayor Martin O'Malley has prepared a proclamation designating May 11th as Ottmar Mergenthaler Day in Baltimore. The German city of Bad Mergentheim, which maintains a museum honoring Ottmar Mergenthaler, has notified our Society that it will have a major celebration in his honor in July. They asked what Baltimore will do for the occasion.

SOCIETY GRANTS \$5,000 TO AATG -CEREMONY SUNDAY, MAY 16th

Our Society, along with the American Association of Teachers of German (MD-DC-VA Chapter) will sponsor a ceremony honoring the German language students who attain high marks in the national German examination. The Society has donated \$5,000 to the teachers' organization for prizes to Maryland students achieving in the 90th percentile. The event takes place on Sunday, May 16th in the Adlersaal of Zion Church, City Hall Plaza. Students from more than 20 Maryland high schools will receive awards. The Society has been encouraging the study of German via this annual event for 13 years. German entertainment will be presented by the students.

Members of our Society are requested to attend the event to encourage the students. The ceremonies are from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm. After the presenting of the awards, refreshments will be served to all who attend.

ANNUAL PICNIC AT BLOB'S PARK

Our annual picnic will be held on Sunday, June 13 at Blob's Park. German food, beer and soda will be provided by Blob's and our members provide the desserts. Tickets are \$15 per person, children 12 and under free. Reservations and advance payment required. All members will receive notification by mail with instructions and directions. This is a great family event. Come and enjoy yourselves and pass on the German tradition of Gemütlichkeit

"The purpose of the German Society of Maryland is to preserve and promote the German heritage, language and traditions through educational, social and benevolent programs; and to develop the unity and continuity of the German American community in the State of Maryland."

KALENDER

April 16 - Annual membership meeting
May 1 - Maifest at Zion
May 2 - AGAS German heritage festival at Blob's Park
May 16 - Awards ceremony for high school students
May 22-23 - Kickers' Springfest in Dundalk
June - 13 Annual picnic at Blob's Park
August 20-22 German Festival
September 25 - Ecumenical Service - Michaelmas
Oct 9-10 - Maryland Oktoberfest 5th Regiment Armory
November - Annual Awards Banquet
November 14 - AGAS festival at Blob's Park

Visit the German Society's website:
www.germansociety-md.com

For more local German-American happenings, check the web site of the Deutschamerikanischer Bürgerverein von Maryland: www.md-germans.org

Tune in to the Edelweiss Hour every Sunday:
Radio 750 AM 9 am

MAUSER TO BE SOLD AT MEETING

Bids on Edward Banka's 1943 German Mauser will be opened at our Annual Meeting on April 16. Delivery will be made to winning bid at a later date.

PRESENT AND FORMER MEMBERS

Congratulations to **Governor Bob Ehrlich** and **Kendall Ehrlich** on the arrival of their son, Joshua Taylor, born March 6.

A book on the lessons from the life of **Diane Geppi-Aikens**, who died last June 30 at age 40, published by Time-Warner Books, is now on sale at all bookstores. It is entitled "Lucky Every Day" and is written by Chip Silverman, a prominent Maryland author. It is an "inspirational" book containing 20 stories, each presented through the eyes of one of Diane's students and colleagues, each shining a light on a different aspect of Diane's philosophy of life, as the mother of four young children and as a charismatic leader, teacher and athletic coach. \$20. 140 pages.

Henry L. Mencken's book *Chrestomathy* has been added to the required reading list in France for university students aspiring to be teachers of English at the high school level. (How many English classes in the United States today have ever read Mencken?)

MARYLAND'S GERMAN LEADERS LOCK HORNS OVER SPENDING

Governor Robert Ehrlich and Michael Busch, Speaker of the House of Delegates, battled over the issues of taxes and slots, with the result that the legislature adjourned on April 12 without passing either. The Speaker wanted to raise taxes and the Governor refused to allow it, affirming his campaign promise of "no tax increase". The Republican Governor wanted a slot-machine bill to raise money for education, and the Democratic Speaker refused to let it come to a vote unless the Governor capitulated and raised taxes. (Another prominent German name in the MD legislature is Lowell Stoltzfus, elected leader of the Republican delegation in the State Senate.)

SPARGELZEIT AT THE EMBASSY

The German Embassy honors Spargelzeit, or spring asparagus season, with a buffet of white and green varieties of the edible lily in numerous hot and cold dishes, with an assortment of German wines and beers. (\$70. April 22, 2004 7-9 p.m., 202-244-3700)

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Michael Nieberding reported that the value of the Society's holdings, as of January 29, 2004, was \$507,512. To this was added \$47,000 received by the Society in February from the Estate of Ed Banka.

GERMAN ACTIVITIES AT ZION City Hall Plaza, Baltimore

MAIFEST - Saturday, May 1. Raising of May Pole in the garden. Family activities 3:30 to 5:30 pm. Free admission. German sweet treats and Maibowle (May Punch), singing, folk dancing and Kasperltheater.

MAI-DINNER - Also May 1, sponsored by the Zion Forum for German Culture and the Baltimore Kickers. 5:30 to 8:30. Tickets \$15 (children \$5). Home cooked dinner with German beer (Maibock), live music, entertainment. Reservations are **necessary**. Call church office by April 29. (410-727-3939)

SPRINGFEST - Thursday, May 6, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. Bratwurst & buns, cakes and coffee. Shop at flower and plant sale, book and picture sale, baked goods.

OTTMAR MERGENTHALER - OUR SOCIETY'S MOST FAMOUS MEMBER

By Christel van der Berg



His invention of the linotype machine in 1884 is regarded as the greatest advance in printing since Gutenberg's printing press 400 years earlier. He brought about a revolution in newspapers, books and the advertising industry.

In the lobby of the Mergenthaler Vocational-Technical High School is this inscription to Ottmar Mergenthaler, the man who never gave up: "He sparked a chain reaction that created hundreds of industries and millions of jobs. More important, he made possible the mass education and dissemination of information that in a single generation advanced our level of literacy by a full century."

Ottmar Mergenthaler has been called the second Gutenberg. While Johann Gutenberg created the process of printing, Mergenthaler revolutionized it. Before Mergenthaler invented the Linotype, the printing industry was small. Newspapers had only a few pages.

He was born on May 11, 1854 in Hachtel, near Stuttgart, the son of a village school teacher. At age 18 he decided to immigrate to America since he could not find a job in Germany. Mergenthaler arrived in Baltimore at Locust Point on the steamer "Berlin", in "steerage". In 1873 he worked for August Hall in a shop at 13 Mercer Street, 3 doors down from Charles Schneidereith's printing business.

Mergenthaler had heard of attempts by others to make a machine which could set type for printers and he set out to invent one himself. After many unsuccessful attempts, he invented metal matrices into which molten metal was poured to form a line of type. He exhibited it in January, 1884, in his shop on Bank Lane in Baltimore before a dozen or so excited spectators. But the model was not yet ready for the market.

In 1886 Mergenthaler introduced the "circulating matrix" device which created a "literally inexhaustible fountain of new type". This machine was the first one used commercially. On a morning in July of 1886 a demonstration was held in the composing room of the

New York Tribune. Many newspaper officials were present. They looked at each other in amazement. When the Tribune publisher, Whitelaw Reid, picked up the first piece of metal he said, "Ottmar you've done it - a line of type".

Hundreds of orders came in for the "miracle machine". Baltimore was the manufacturing center for Linotypes and also the proving ground. The first book printing company in the world to install the machine was the Friedenwald Company (now The Lord Baltimore Press). The Linotype would change the 19th century's way of life. The last model he developed in 1890 was his most famous one. By then he was in poor health, with tuberculosis. He moved to New Mexico in 1896 but soon returned to Baltimore. The inventor died on Saturday, October 28, 1899 at the age of 45. He is buried in Loudon Park Cemetery.

The modest inventor was honored in many ways after his death. A Centennial Celebration was held in May 1954 in Hachtel, his German birthplace. The New Town Hall and The Mergenthaler Museum were dedicated. His only surviving son, Herman of Rye, was the guest of honor. A German ten-pfennig stamp was issued. The Zion Church in Baltimore, where he was a member, has a memorial window. He is the most world-renown member of The German Society of Maryland which is sponsoring a writing contest to honor his memory.

Baltimore, the inventor's adopted and beloved city, has done more than any other community to honor him. Through the bequest of his son, Eugene, a laboratory for biology was dedicated by the Johns Hopkins University in February 1942, called the Mergenthaler Hall. In 1954 a new school building known as the Mergenthaler Vocational-Technical High School was dedicated. His son, Herman and his daughter, Pauline (a Baltimorean) attended this ceremony.

Although the linotype is being replaced by computer technology, the Mergenthaler Linotype is used for composition in more than 800 languages and dialects. It has been aptly called "one of the most democratic inventions of the age". The value of the Linotype has been incalculable. Up to the time of the invention, there were few newspapers, few books and few public libraries. Advertising hardly existed. The Linotype changed all of that forever.

MERGENTHALER'S LEGACY

-He is recorded in the membership roll of our Society simply as "O. Mergenthaler" on page 189 of *The History of The German Society of Maryland*, published in 1906.

-A plaque on the house at 135 W. Lanvale Street, Bolton Hill (Baltimore), recalls his residence there in the last years of his life.

-His crystal chandelier, given by his widow to Zion Church, hangs in its library.

-His linotype machine is commemorated by a stained glass window in the narthex of Zion Church.

-His daughter attended the dedication of the school named after her father in Baltimore in 1954.

-His son donated the funds for the Mergenthaler Hall on the campus of The Johns Hopkins University.

ANNUAL DUES ARE DUE NOW

If you have not yet sent in your dues, we ask that you do so promptly. The Society relies heavily on this income. Of the \$15 annual dues, about \$10 is spent for member services, including newsletter, postage, mailing of notices and events for members, the annual meeting. The remaining \$5 goes to rent and clerical expense. Our projects are funded by donations and investments. Our directors and officers receive no "perks" and spend their own money in the performance of their work for the Society.

KICKERS PLAN GERMAN SPRING EVENT IN DUNDALK, MAY 20 - 22

The Baltimore Kickers have scheduled a German event in Essex for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, May 20, 21 and 22. It will be held in the large lot adjacent to the American Legion Hall on Dundalk Avenue. Although it is not called a festival, it will have all of trappings of a German ethnic party, with beer and wurst stands, tents and picnic tables, with many activities for the family. It features live German music, pony rides, a series of plays from the Grimm Brothers' Fairy Tales, acted out by children from the Kickers' German Language School and games for the children. Most of the members of the Kickers' have volunteered to work at the event, including many members of our own Society who also belong to the Kickers' Club. Our Society encourages all of our members to attend to help make it a success for the Kickers, a fellow member with us in the Deutchamerikanischer Bürgerverein von Maryland.



HENRY L. MENCKEN WAS A MEMBER OF THE GERMAN SOCIETY

Brigitte Fessenden, our vice-president and chair of our archives committee, discovered a letter addressed to Henry L. Mencken, accepting him for membership in our Society. The current officers and directors were unaware of Mencken's membership, since we do not have a list of the members in the 1920's. The letter to Mencken, reads as follows:

"March 8th, 1926

*Mr. Henry L. Mencken
1524 Hollins Street
City*

Dear Mr. Mencken:

It gives me pleasure to welcome you as a member of the German Society of Maryland. I am sure that you feel, as we do, that there is a measure of justifiable pride in belonging to an organization which, for one hundred forty-three years, has labored to do good and aid those not always able to help themselves.

With kind personal regards, I am as ever

Sincerely yours,"

Our copy of the letter does not show the name of the officer who signed it, but we surmise that it was signed by the then president, Karl A. M. Scholtz, who served in that office from 1926 to 1941. The discovery of this letter came as a surprise, since Mencken's biography mentions that he was not a "joiner." The Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland, has a record of Mencken's membership in that Society. These two memberships, and his paucity of memberships in other groups, clearly indicates Mencken's pride in his German heritage.



"Father Marty" on his visit to Schwalenberg, Germany in 1991 during the town's 750th anniversary

REV. MARTIN A. SCHWALENBERG PASTOR, CHAPLAIN, COUNSELOR

Monsignor Martin A. Schwalenberg died on March 17 at his home in Broward County, Florida. He was one of our Society's most illustrious and well known members. His body lay in state at The Cathedral of Mary, Our Queen in Baltimore, from which his funeral services were held. Cardinal Keeler, Archbishop Borders and Bishop Newman, and more than 40 priests and monsignori crowded the altar at his funeral Mass.

As a boy he lived in east Baltimore, the son of a Sparrows Point steelworker. His father became a supervisor and worked on the Panama Canal. Martin, himself, worked in the steel mills during summers in his college days. He graduated from Calvert Hall High School where he was an All-Maryland pitcher on its baseball team and was elevated to the school's hall of fame. He spent 2 years at Loyola College, was given a baseball contract by the Philadelphia Athletics and spent a year playing on its farm team. He decided to become a priest and entered St. Mary's Seminary.

PRIESTLY CAREER

His first assignment as a young curate was at the Immaculate Conception Church, Towson. He served as a chaplain in the army reserve, retiring as a Lt. Colonel. He was pastor of Baltimore's inner city St. Paul's Church. Later he was pastor of St. Charles Church,

Pikesville at the time of his appointment as a monsignor. In his priestly career, he officiated at more than 2,000 weddings, 2,500 funerals, baptized more than 5,000 babies, and instructed hundreds of people wishing to become members of the Catholic Church.

CHAPLAIN TO ATHLETES, POLICE

"Father Marty" served as chaplain for the Baltimore Orioles, the Baltimore Colts football team and the Blast soccer team, as well as for the Maryland State police and numerous civic and religious organizations. After his retirement, he spent two months each year in Fort Lauderdale, Florida during the Baltimore Orioles' spring training. "Fr. Marty's" name was often heard in the broadcasts of the Oriole's games. His counsel and spiritual guidance was sought by many of the athletes. He was a close friend of Hall-of-Famer Brooks Robinson, who gave father his World Series Championship ring which Father Marty wore at all times.

As a chaplain for the Maryland State Police, he always stopped at the scene of serious traffic accidents to assist and administer to the victims.

PRIDE IN GERMAN HERITAGE

Father Schwalenberg was a member of German Society for many years and attended the Society's award banquets and participated in our ecumenical services. Fr. Marty traveled to Germany to visit the city of Schwalenberg in Westphalia, where the highlight of trip was his presiding at services in the town's Catholic church. The town is now a famous artist colony. There were no more inhabitants there named Schwalenberg, so he was received in the town as a celebrity. The town's castle on top the small mountain was converted to a hotel, where the monsignor was given its best room in the castle's tower, with a panoramic view of the valley below. He spoke German fluently. During the sojourn, Father Marty traveled through Nord Rhein-Westfalen, Rheinland-Pfalz and Bavaria. He especially enjoyed being greeted by the Bavarian children with a "Grüss Gott" as he walked down the streets.

The daily prayer book for priest in the diocese lists the names of all priests who have died on each day. Fr. Marty is the only priest in the history of the diocese to have died on St. Patrick's day. His closest friend, Msgr. Myles McGowan, an immigrant from Ireland, was envious of Fr. Marty's good fortune and joked: "I guess I'll die on April Fool's Day!"

Msgr. Schwalenberg appointed Ted Potthast, who accompanied him on his trip to Germany, as Executor of his estate, along with a cousin, Timothy Welsh.



THE BALTIMORE FIRE OF 1904 - BY A GERMAN AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHER

The publication of this photograph in our newsletter is the first time in history that it has been shown to the public. The photo was taken in February, 1904 by William A. Potthast. The negative, on an 8"x10" glass plate, was buried in the Potthast family archives for 100 years. The plate was presented by Ted Potthast to his cousin, Michael Potthast who printed it from the glass negative and enhanced it by digital technology. Michael is the great-grandson of William.

The fire destroyed much of the commercial area which was dominated by German merchants. It began in the dry goods store of John Hurst, who suffered damages of \$1,500,000. Other Germans burned out included: Wm. Koch, importer; Charles Burger, clothing; Cohen & Adler, shoes; Wm. Seligman, paper; Strauss & Co., storage; Guggenheimer, Weil & Co., lithographers; Schwartzkopf Toy Co.; D.K. Wallenstein, milliners; Wiegert & Co., shoes; Sieger Bros., trunks; L. Grief & Bro., clothing; Winkelmann & Brown Drug Co. and many other businesses with German names.

Baltimore's German population produced many photographers. William Potthast, who immigrated from Borgholz in Westphalia in 1892, was one of the founders of the Potthast Bros. furniture company. William learned photography in order to make pictures of furniture to use in advertising. To make some extra

money, he met the ships coming from Bremerhaven to take photos of arriving immigrants and crews. Some of the glass plate negatives of ships, crews and passengers are still held by the family. William, proud of his German heritage, was president of the Baltimore chapter of the Steuben Society. Hundreds of photos of furniture, including the negatives, taken by William and his nephew, Theodore (a former director of our Society), are still stored in the family archives.

A FAMILY TRADITION

The photography tradition begun by William was passed on to his descendants. William's grandson, also named William, maintains a studio in Winter Haven, Florida. He has served as the president of the Florida Professional Photographers' Association and some of his award-winning works have been exhibited in the National Art Gallery in Washington, D.C.

His son, Michael, has pushed the profession to the limits: he is a computer specialist who uses those skills in digital photography and operates a business which uses both still photography and videos. He worked for Time-Warner making commercials until he opened his own firm in Winter Haven. In a recent contest for TV commercials, 12 winning commercials were selected: Michael made 11 of them.

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DR. SEUSS HONORED WITH NEW U.S. 37¢ POSTAGE STAMP

Generations of children now aged 8 through 50 can recite from memory Dr. Seuss' stories: "One fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish" and many other of his dozens of books which helped them learn to read. Now the Post Office has honored the memory of this German American personality, Theodor Seuss Geisel. The strange animals he created stirred the imaginations of millions. Geisel's face appears on the stamp which brings this newsletter to you. Turn to the next page and take a look!

GERMAN UNIVERSITIES LOOK TO AMERICAN SCHOOLS AS MODELS

What goes around, comes around. Some of American's top universities, such as The Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, were modeled on the German system of the 19th century. In Germany today, most universities are public and are failing. The public universities are free, but many students are seeking out Germany's 58 private universities, which follow the American system and charge tuition, because they offer a better education. Many Germans are willing to pay to get a better education than is offered by the state. The private schools can pick their own students, hire and fire their own professors without the encumbrances of the government rules for the state universities, and get rid of students who do not perform. State university professors, protected by the system and guaranteed annual raises regardless of merit, pay scant attention to the students, who get little or no counseling or motivation.. Since school is free, some students stay for 10 years without fulfilling their degree requirements. The public system in Germany is in need of reform, and some states are fighting an uphill political battle to do so.

SERFS, SLAVES & ATTITUDES

An interesting discussion took place at one of the tables at our annual banquet last November. A member said: "I don't feel any sympathy toward the black people who demand reparations because their ancestors were slaves. My ancestors did not come to America until well after the civil war and they had nothing to do with slavery." Another said: "My ancestors were serfs and fled Germany in the early 1800's. Serfs were treated like slaves, and often worse than slaves." Another at the banquet table mentioned the Hessians who were taken involuntarily from their homes and sold into the service of England to fight against Americans in the Revolutionary War. We also learn of 3,000 Germans held as slaves in the area of the upper Hudson River in New York. Our Society has personal knowledge of German immigrants placed in slavery on the oyster boats of the Chesapeake Bay, resulting in testimony in the U. S. Congress by officers of The German Society of Maryland, asking for protective federal laws when the Maryland legislature refused to enact any. There is an abundance of literature on Germans held in a form of slavery for a term of years to pay for their voyage from Europe to America.

ECONOMIC REFORMS BEGIN IN GERMAN WELFARE SYSTEM

After a tough battle with the opposition, the German government enacted tough new laws in December to try to rein in the welfare system and make the economy more flexible. The German tradition has been that one would get a job and keep it for life. The major impact of the new laws is to loosen the hiring and firing rules.

As economic prospects dim, Germans now find themselves holding down two and three jobs to make ends meet. An accountant who worked his way through school as a window washer, now uses his window-washing license to moonlight as a washer, and on weekends tops up steins at a beer garden where he also worked as a student. To encourage moonlighting and to ease unemployment, the German tax law permits part-time workers to make up to \$500 tax-free. Harmen Lehment, an analyst, reported: "It is clear that incentives have changed in favor of having a small job, in addition to a regular job."

Founded 1783
Incorporated by Act of the General Assembly
of Maryland, Chapter 100, Feb. 3, 1818



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The German Society of Maryland

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APRIL-MAY, 2004
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WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

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Anthony
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A special thanks to the students and faculty of McDaniels College for their efforts in recruiting new members.

Plan to attend the student awards program, Sunday, May 16 and our annual picnic at Blobs Park, Sunday, June 13

MAIL TO:

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ Zipcode: _____

Spouse (Optional): _____ Phone: _____

Referred by: _____

"I hereby apply to be a member of the German Society of Maryland".

Annual dues \$15. Spouse may be included at no extra cost. Make check payable to "The German Society of MD" P.O. Box 22585, Baltimore MD 21203-4585

This newsletter is published by The German Society of Maryland, an organization founded in 1783 and incorporated in 1817 by Act of the General Assembly of Maryland. It is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation pursuant to the provisions of §501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Society is a member of Der Deutschamerikanischer Bürgerverein von Maryland, D.A.N.K. (German American National Congress) The United German-American Committee of the USA, Inc. and other civic groups which promote German-American culture and heritage. Please submit items of interest to Theodore J. Potthast, Jr., Editor, at 1819 Leadburn Road, Towson, MD 21204-1830 or fax 410-832-2903.